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ABSTRACT

As a field learning experience, 14 students at College of the Mainland (Texas) examined the structure and components of community leadership in Texas City, Texas. The students were divided into two groups, under the direction of a humanities staff member. The first group, using the reputational study technique, asked community residents to identify the leaders in the community. The second group, using the decision analysis technique, approached leaders in public health, planning, zoning, education, and business. Each leader was asked what the most important decision made in the last five years in his particular area had been, and who had made that decision. After obtaining a list of 24 influentials, the two groups combined to interview the identified leaders. After discussing interviewing procedures, and role-playing both interviewer and interviewee, each student was assigned an interview. After the first round of interviews, the list of community leaders was narrowed to 13. Final interviews were conducted with nine of these leaders. The leadership emerged as loose, informal, and somewhat jurisdictional. It is hoped that the study findings will be of some use to the college leadership in planning community services. Copies of the project proposal and its "statement of use" are appended, as are copies of survey instruments. (NHM)

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A STUDY OF COMMUNITY INFLUENCE AND LEADERSHIP

EDITED BY

DONALD G. BASS &

LARRY SMITH

COLLEGE OF THE MAINLAND

TEXAS CITY, TEXAS

AUGUST, 1975

JC 750 533

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Future Shock is the premature arrival of the future.

I. INTRODUCTION

In January, 1975, a study group was formed at College of the Mainland to research the identity and structure of community influence in Texas City, Texas. Studies of community influences have been done in a variety of settings over the last fifteen years. The work of Floyd Hunter and Ralph Kimbrough immediately influenced this project. Another important influence was Joseph Cook, National Lecturer for Societal Factions, Nova University.

Students of all ages volunteered for the project; they came with a wide variety of motivations and backgrounds. Those who worked on this project were:

Margaret Villarreal	Alan Anderson
Richard Edson	Carmen Anderson
Paul Matteson	Linda Siegelquist
Blanche Ambramovitz	Ann Mistrot
Robin Davenport	Anne Miller (Learning Resources)
Peggy Dywer	Dr. Robert Wegmann, Consultant, UH/CLC
Oscar Cochran	Larry Smith, Faculty Advisor
Lucille Perry	Don Bass, Faculty Advisor
Chuck Tietz	

The advisors wish to thank the members of the study group and the leaders of the community for making the study an extremely pleasant experience.

Don Bass

Larry Smith, Advisors

August, 1975

Texas City, Texas

II. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

PURPOSE:

No community runs itself; every community needs leaders who can identify problem areas and decide how to deal with these problems.

This study's primary purpose was to discover the structure of community leadership in Texas City, Texas. A secondary purpose was to provide a field learning experience for students at College of the Mainland. Eleven students made this a part of their course work in speech, economics, political science, sociology, and cooperative education courses. In addition to these two purposes, it was hoped that the findings of this study would be of some use to the college leadership in planning community services.

The original goals of the study are found on page 1 , in the Appendix. The "Statement of Use" of the study is on page 2 . This statement was presented to every leader who was interviewed.

BACKGROUND:

Scholars have evolved two general methodologies to investigate community influence. Work in this area has been done by two different professional disciplines. Floyd Hunter, a sociologist, developed the "reputational" method in Atlanta, Georgia, during the 50's. In 1958, Robert Dahl, a political scientist, developed the "decision analysis" technique in New Haven, Connecticut. Since that time, various combinations of the two methods have been used. We will first outline the two methodologies separately and then describe our own approach.

REPUTATIONAL STUDY:

This method involves finding out from several notable "judges" in the community who the leaders are. In Atlanta, Hunter asked for nominees from a variety of individuals knowledgeable about the city; it was quickly apparent that the same fifty names continued to reappear.

He then interviewed the individuals who were repeatedly named to discover who they were, how they communicated with each other, and what their values were. He found a fairly close group, held together by common interests, mutual obligations, money, and habit. Hunter's top structure concerned itself only with ideology, major policy decisions, and subordinates implemented policy through governmental, religious, educational, civic, and cultural institutions (all financially dependent on economic institutions). There were no women in the group of civic leaders, and only one educator. Most of the leaders were businessmen. The group was very cohesive and was marked by frequent and informal communication. When Hunter interviewed the leaders he was well-received; they exhibited considerable awareness of their role in "making things happen."

DECISION ANALYSIS:

In contrast to Hunter's approach this method begins with the identification of specific key decisions in several areas of community life. Once these decisions are identified, the researcher attempts to discover who made the decisions. In New Haven, Dahl discovered that the leaders who made decisions concerning business and industry were not those who made decisions about education. Dahl also found that while wealthy influentials were of higher social status than the rest of the community and had more leadership skills, they had little to do with many key political decisions.

POSSIBLE DECISION-MAKING PATTERNS:

Studies of different communities have found them to have a variety of decision-making patterns. For example:

1. Monopolistic--Hunter's single power elite model is an example.
2. Pluralistic--Many groups compete for power for the purpose of maintaining self-centered interests and individual control over specific areas.

3. Multi-group, non-competitive--A pluralistic model in which elites are non-competitive.
4. Competitive elites--A pluralistic model in which the elites vie for power in all key areas of decision-making.

Names for these structures of influence are very arbitrary; there can be many varieties and combinations of these.

METHODS OF THIS STUDY:

In November, 1974, the group requested and obtained the consulting services of Dr. Robert Wegmann of the University of Houston at Clear Lake City.

The study group initially divided itself into two groups, one group began with the reputational technique, the other used the decision analysis approach. Each group developed a separate interview instrument. The decision analysis group approached leaders in public health, planning, zoning, education, and business. Each leader was asked, "what has been the most important decision made in the last five years in your particular area?"

The decisions selected were:

Public Health--Expansion of Galveston County Hospital

Planning--Feasibility of Industrial Park

Zoning--The City Plan

Education--Texas City I.S.D. Bond Issue for Career Center

Business--Establishment of Tradewinds Shopping Center

From knowledgeable residents of Texas City the reputational group obtained the names of a list of 24 influentials. (See page 10). At this point the study group decided to drop the separate approaches into one interview schedule. Dr. Wegmann critiqued and helped refine the interview schedule which is listed on page 4 ofthe appendix.

When the schedule was completed, Dr. Wegmann discussed good interviewing procedures then had group members role-play both interviewer and interviewee. Following this activity, each member was assigned an interview. The first interview took place in early May. After the first round of interviews the list of community leaders was narrowed to thirteen. These final interviews were conducted in June. Nine of the thirteen interviews were completed. It is somewhat of a limitation on the study that we were unable to complete four interviews. However, those we completed were so consistent that it is doubtful that the last four would have given us much new information

III. FINDINGS

Findings of the study have been divided into three major areas: (1) Identification of Community Influentials, (2) Type of Leadership Structure, (3) Decision Analysis.

COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS:

Using the methods described earlier the study group identified as the three most influential leaders in Texas City:

Emmett Lowry: As long time resident and Mayor, Lowry was unanimously judged to be the single most influential person in Texas City. Considered hard-working and capable, he has developed a reputation as the strongest mayor in recent Texas City history. His major interest seems to be in city maintenance and service areas such as street, sewer, and recreation improvement.

Charles Doyle: As mayor pro-tem, Councilman, Doyle is the most versatile community influential in that he has broad-based interests and influences decision-making in a wide variety of areas. Perhaps the most knowledgeable person about the issues affecting Texas City, Doyle can reasonably be expected to assume the role of most influential community leader in years ahead.

Paul Teague: A knowledgeable and active union leader, Teague has become one of the three most influential community leaders in Texas City. He has particular influence in education (serving as College of the Mainland Trustee President and Texas Coordinating Board of High Education Member); he is, of course, particularly active in matters of interest to organized labor.

In addition to these, the following ten individuals were identified as influential members of the Texas City community:

(1) John Acree - M.D., member of The Board of Trustees, Texas City I.S.D.

(2) Jerry Buster - President, Texas City National Bank

(3) Larry Durland - Plant Manager, American Oil

(4) Ray Holbrook - County Judge, Galveston County

(5) Billy Jones - Business Agent, OCAW (Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers)

(6) C.R. Johnson - Tax Assessor Collector, Galveston County

(7) Paul Manning - Superintendent, Texas City I.S.D.

(8) John Reeves - M.D., Member and Past President, Board of Trustees, Texas City I.S.D.

(9) James Simpson - Lawyer, Trustee, College of the Mainland

(10) Fred Taylor - President, College of the Mainland

TYPE OF LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE:

Theorists have developed classification systems to fit the common configurations of typical city power structures. The primary ones are as follows: (1) Monopolistic, (2) Multi-group noncompetitive, (3) Competitive elite, and (4) Democratic Pluralism.

While theorists may create such classifications, more often than not actual communities exhibit characteristics of several of these categories. Texas City's leadership structure is no exception. For example, as in most multi-group, non-competitive structures there seems to be a high degree of agreement among most influentials about the "kind of community we want." For example, on such matters as school discipline, degree of pollution control, rate and type of economic growth, etc., there is no intense disagreement. This may be in part due to the fact that those citizens who hold other views on these issues have not become immersed in community activities to the degree necessary to wield influence on decision-making.

Texas City also exhibits some of the characteristics of monopolistic leadership structures in that, while their dominance is not complete, a group of influentials composed of businessmen, professionals, and politicians rather completely

dominate decision-making. Also there is a great deal of apathy on the part of the average Texas Citian. Sporadic opposition which may spring up to elite decisions generally lacks organization. It also appears that it is not easy for new persons or groups to reach positions of influence.

Texas City also exhibits some of the characteristics of the democratic pluralistic model in that the influentials vary in their impact as the issues and decisions change. For example, those who have had influence in areas such as planning and zoning may have little influence on educational decisions. Also, as in the pluralistic structure elected officials hold higher power status; this is obviously the case in Texas City where ten of the thirteen most influential hold an elected or appointed public office.

In summary, Texas City seems to be primarily a multi-group, non-competitive structure with some aspects of both monopolistic and pluralistic systems also identifiable. The Texas City leadership is not formally organized; rather it is a loose, informal and somewhat jurisdictional structure.

DECISION ANALYSIS:

It is apparent that each influential has more impact on some decisions than others. While the Superintendent of Schools is clearly the single most influential leader in terms of public school educational decision-making, members of the medical profession clearly have a disproportionate influence through their membership on the school board. Medical representation is understandable in educational affairs;the general public has historically had confidence in the medical profession. Doctors are people who value education; and they often seek school trustee positions to implement convictions. Texas City has four M.D.'s on its seven-man school board.

When one looks at recent important educational decisions it appears that the Texas City I.S.D.'s decision to build the $5,000,000 Career Center was well

orchestrated and had the support of the community leadership structure. One influential indicated the decision to build Texas City I.S.D. Career Center grew out of board attendance at a national convention. The development of the Career Center seems to contradict the comment of another influential who contended that the inordinate medical influence on the Texas City Board had resulted in a strong emphasis on both athletics and the academic curriculum, to the deprivation of vocational education.

Another educational decision which was judged to be important was the development of College of the Mainland. It appears that a united community effort was necessary for this effort, with industry,business, and labor working cooperatively. Of the present influentials, both Lowry and Teague played important roles in support of the development of COM. While the support for the Phase II construction of the College was broad-based, the bond issue election was passed only because of a get-out-and-vote campaign in the black community.

While the improvement of the Galveston County Hospital is seen by Texas City influentials as important to the county, they were not greatly involved in the decision. The decision was made by the Board of Directors of the Hospital and the County Commissioner's Court. The most important decision in the area of health care in Texas City in recent years was the construction of the new Danforth Hospital. The medical profession, as one might expect, exerted the greatest influence. However, the City Council endorsed the project.

In the areas of zoning and planning, the City Council, under the strong leadership of Mayor Lowry, has been the most influential.

The establishment of the Tradewinds Shopping Center was essentially a private venture spearheaded by Billy Knox. In view of some of the influentials that decision has heightened the movement of the main business district westward, down Palmer Highway, and toward the Gulf Freeway. It apparently was not opposed by the influentials, but plans formulated by some influentials to

ameliorate the deterioration of the Sixth Street and Texas Avenue business area have not been successful. Perhaps this is due to the lack of effective response on part of the business community. It was the view of some influentials that it is possible to generate enthusiasm from only the small portion of the business community affected by a given issue.

Of the various groups, the elected city officials, principally Mayor Lowry and Councilman Doyle, wield the greatest overall influence. The elected officials have primary concerns in the areas of planning and city improvement with an emphasis on city services and facilities (streets, sewer, recreation, library, police, etc.). With the exception of Doyle they show less interest in matters such as education, industrial park development, etc. The medical profession, as stated earlier, exerts strong influence in educational matters, particularly in the public schools. Labor and industry are significant groups and have influence on every issue in which they are interested. The general business community is supportive of many efforts, but does not seem to carry enough weight to sway decision-making one way or the other. The minority community is well organized, particularly the Mexican-American community, but its leadership is fragmented and without economic power, and hence lacks real influence. The members of the clergy, while influencing their various congregations, are not very effective as a group.

IV. THEMES AND ISSUES

During the interviews, several themes and issues surfaced which need mentioning. We will mention those which came up at least twice.

Several of the leaders mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce had little impact, primarily because of its lack of resources. The Chamber has a manager and a clerical staff. There is no real negative feeling toward the Chamber, but there is a feeling that it would be better if the Chamber of Commerce had more influence.

Related to this, there is an impression among some leaders that the local business community is unorganized. Industrial concerns have much more influence because industry is organized.

It is not surprising to learn the role of civic clubs; they are used for community service and communication. Influentials participate in civic clubs to stay in the flow of community life, many individuals who might play a more important role in the co nity are unwilling or unable to invest time in such activities as civic clubs.

Several leaders expressed concern over the deterioration of parts of the city, and over a lack of leadership skills on the part of black citizens. The skills cited involved investigation, communication, and problem-solving. The concern for the deterioration of the city is related to an affectionate feeling that many of the leaders have for the "old" Texas City and its "old" families.

The older part of the city is adjacent to two areas which are deteriorating rapidly, Texas Avenue and Sixth Street. Several of those interviewed revealed a mixed feeling about the growth of the city toward the West. On the one hand, some leaders see this as economic growth. On the other hand, there is an implied feeling of nostalgia, loyalty, and concern for the old Texas City and the Sixth Street area. The leaders strong support of the new Danforth Hospital (in the older part of town) is an example of their feeling for the "established"

part of Texas City. After all, most of the leaders are either natives of Texas City, or have lived here for many years.

Another theme that emerged concerned the zoning commission. There is a great deal of sensitivity about this agency--from within and without the city government. Some within the government are weary of the accusation that officials play politics with zoning. Officials themselves cite the "City Plan" as their guiding rationale. Others, outside government, say that the members of the commission are very influential; indeed overly so.

Finally, the theme which is most obvious is that of jurisdictional (or "territorial") view of leadership, a sort of "district" perception on the part of most leaders that, "This is my business, that is your business." There is an unwritten rule of not over-stepping one's jurisdiction. The spirit of the rule seems to be fueled by the very serious desire to avoid open conflict or competition. One of the problems of this approach to community leadership is that it tends to inhibit communication between groups of community leaders.

V. FUTURE CHALLENGES

While Texas City has many accomplishments of which to be proud (a modern hospital, a nationally known community college, strong economy, and excellent recreation facilities to name a few) this study suggests challenges for community leaders. These challenges are underlined in the paragraph below:

(1) For one, much more emphasis needs to be placed on planning. It appears that there needs to be more formal coordination between the myriad public agencies and institutions to prevent overlapping and duplication while providing maximum services.

(2) Human services need to be emphasized more. For example, it is ironic that the technology and resources which have enabled man to walk on the moon are harnessed just 20 miles from Texas City, yet it is virtually impossible for some people here to obtain adequate transportation to medical, recreational, and educational resources. The commitment of funds toward the development of human resources has been overshadowed by the commitment of funds for capital improvements.

(3) The evidence of urban blight is upon the city; important decisions need to be made regarding 6th Street, Texas Avenue, Harbor Village and the neighborhoods which surround these business areas,

(4) It appears that Texas City may be too dependent on the petrochemical industry. Perhaps a more diversified economy is needed.

All the problems which face the larger society also face Texas City in microcosm (poverty, race relations, quality of life, adequate housing, etc.);

however, it may well be that this community can succeed where others have failed. Some possible steps for Texas City are:

(1) Develop a more cohesive, coordinated leadership structure.

(2) Plan for the future by utilizing information being generated by those engaged in studies of the future (there is a great deal at our doorsteps).

(3) Establish goals and objectives for the community such as:

a. Improvement in quality of life; adequate health care, housing, transportation, education, clean air, clean water, etc. for all.

b. Development of an integrated community in every sense of the word.

c. Development of a democratic, pluralistic, community.

d. Involve new citizens; obtain more citizen participation.

(4) Maximize services to citizens through coordination of all agencies, institutions, etc., by preventing overlapping and duplication.

"We are very fond of the future; we intend to live the rest of our lives there."

our children

August, 1975

APPENDIX

POWER STRUCTURE STUDY

OVERVIEW: The Humanities and Continuing Education and Community Services Divisions plus others who may be interested will undertake a study of the College of the Mainland District (or one of the subparts) to determine the Power Structure.

PROCESS: Utilize two groups of College of the Mainland students under the direction of a Humanities staff member to research the Power Structure of a chosen area.* One group will utilize the "Reputational Technique" while the other will use the "Decision Analysis Technique". (A combination of the two can be useful also.) The results will be used to identify the Power Structure. (See attachment)

At this point a dialogue can begin between representatives of the College and the Power Structure . "Education", hopefully, can be transmitted both ways.

POTENTIAL RESULTS:

1) Students can have a meaningful experience in a community involvement activity. (Perhaps a separate or special course could be arranged.)

2) The College could have objective information as to the Power Structure rather than "chance meetings and perceptions," this should be a part of MIS and should enhance decision-making.

3) Communications can be opened between an important segment of the community and College of the Mainland on important issues in which a broad cross section of College of the Mainland staff could be involved.

Areas of discussion could include college policy, public issues, community concerns, etc.

FUNDING: Potential funds are available through the Texas Committee for the Humanities. Some money can be expected from the Continuing Education and Community Services budget.

I believe the necessary steps can be taken so that a proposal can be submitted this fall looking toward a January, 1975 implementation date.

* Perhaps College of the Mainland students can work in Texas City and La Marque and utilizing the Community Education Process high school students can conduct the study in the Community Education Cooperative school. (Hitchcock, Santa Fe, Dickinson)

STATEMENT OF USE

The Purpose of the Study

No community runs itself; every community needs leaders who can identify problem areas and make decisions which will tend to those problems. This study's purpose is to discover the structure and components of the community leadership in Texas City.

The Use of Findings

1. No widespread distribution of the findings is planned.

2. Every leader interviewed will receive a copy of the complete report, including the list of leaders, analysis of decisions, and a description of the leadership structure.

3. The relationship between leaders will be a confidential matter.

4. There will be a short news story on the activity of this study group. It will cover the following:

   a. the purpose and method of the study
   b. student members
   c. a list of the community leaders identified
   d. a comment on the general nature of the community leadership (i.e. is it competitive, single-leader? etc.)

5. These will be a continuing study group dealing with community leadership, citizen participation, and future of the community. These findings will be confidential for the study group.

PROPOSED AGENDA

February 1	Consultant visit 1 A. Survey societal factors B. Survey political analysis 1. reputational 2. technique decision C. Provide bibliography D. Assign the design
March 1	Consultant visit 2 A. Review political analysis B. Critique them C. Interview training D. Launch the project, operationally
April 1	Identify power structure of Texas City by both methods A. Synthesize findings B. Discuss findings C. Create a structure for communications D. Consultant visit 3
May 15	Administer the event
May 30	Compile, edit, and publish the experience

CONCERNS

- measurement of political knowledge
- measurement of attitudes of:
  - ----students
  - ----influentials

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Explain the Study

(Like -- "Thank you very much for giving me a little time today to interview you. I am part of a study-group at the college which is trying to learn more about the dynamics of our community. You have been identified as a person who makes decisions which are vital to the running of the community and its future.")

B. Present Decisions

(Like -- "I wonder if you would take a look at this list of decisions. These are decisions which cut across many areas of community life. They have been evaluated as highly important decisions.")

II. DECISION ANALYSIS

A. YOUR ROLE

("Would you please indicate which decisions you participated in and what your contribution was?") When was the decision made?

1. (Health)

2. (Planning)

3. (Zoning)

4. (Education)

5. Business

B. OTHER"S ROLE

"Could you comment on what other community leaders played a part in this decision?"

1. (Health)

2. (Planning)

3. (Zoning)

4. (Education)

5. (Business)

C. THE PROCESS

("Was this decision very difficult for you and others to arrive at? What kind of consensus was required? Did anyone make competing suggestions? How did they fare? How long did it take to make the decision? Who was primarily responsible for the decision made?")

1. (Health)

2. (Planning)

3. (Zoning)

4. (Education)

5. (Business)

III. RELATIONSHIP

("Some of the community leaders you have mentioned I have already come across. Here is a list of 13 leaders in Texas City of which you are one. How well acquainted are you with other leaders in this group? [hand "the relationship scale] [when he finishes] If you could choose only three leaders who are the most important in the community, who would they be? (Just circle them.)

IV. FACE SHEET DATA

1. FOR INTERVIEWEE

A. ORGANIZATIONS

("What organizations in our community are important to the making of decisions like these? Which organizations are you a member of?")

B. EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

("In your place of business do you meet a lot of people? What is that business? Is it a very large business? How many people do you employ here? [close interview with a friendly chat.]).

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY DECISIONS

AREA	
1. Public Health	Expansion of Galveston County Hospital
2. Planning	Feasibility of Industrial Park
3. Zoning	"The City Plan"
4. Education	T.C.I.S.D. Bond Issue for Career Center
5. Business	Establishment of Tradewinds Shopping Center
6. Other	

revised
April, 1975

COMMUNITY LEADER	CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND	FRIEND	ACQUAINTANCE	KNOW CASUALLY	DON'T KNOW
John Acree					
Jerry Buster					
Chuck Doyle					
Larry Durland					
Ray Holbrook					
Billie Jones					
C.R. Johnson					
Emmett Lowry					
Paul Manning					
John Reeves					
Jim Simpson					
Fred Taylor					
Paul Teague					

Community Leaders	1 Close Personal Friend	2 Friend	3 Acquaintance	4 Know Casually	5 Don't Know
John Acree					
Jerry Buster					
John Balione					
Chuck Doyle					
Jack Goddard					
Dr. R. Green					
Johnny Henderson					
Ray Holbrook					
Joe Hoover					
Billie Jones					
C.R. Johnson					
Ms. Billie Knox					
Herb Langford					
Emmett Lowry					
Holman Lillienstern					
Ed Mabry					
Paul Manning					
John Reeves					
Seymour Richbrook					
Carl Rust					
Jim Simpson					
Fred Taylor					
Paul Teague					
Calvin Vincent					

1. Rate the ten leaders who contribute the most to decision-making.

2. Circle the three leaders who contribute the most to decision-making.

SOME INTERVIEW TIPS

* Spend a little time at the beginning having conversation in order to establish rapport. Chat at the close, too. Move transitionally and naturally into the information gathering portion of the interview.

* Don't ask what you already know.

* Don't spend all of your time writing.

* Try to look at the person as much as possible while writing.

* Don't write if it makes the person nervous.

* Be positive; use positive terms; this should be somewhat of an ego trip for the person being interviewed.

* Refer back to conversation to show that you are listening.

* Keep the interview within 30 minutes.

* Don't have a "fill-in the blank" type interview; keep it conversational; have the main purposes for the interview clearly in your mind before-hand.

* Ethics are important. Be above board. Explain clearly how the information will be used.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

NOV 7 1975

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES

From: America's Birthday. A planning Guide for Citizen's Participation During the Bicentennial Years. People's Bicentennial Commission. New York, New York. Simon and Shuster, 1974.

Community Power

Research is also needed into Community Power. Ask a few simple questions. Who sits on the corporate boards of the five largest businesses in your area? How many sit on more than one board? More than two boards? How many of the individuals involved now hold elective office, or have held it in the past? Any close examination of Moody's Industrials can provide these answers.

Who sits on the boards of the utility companies in your area? On the five largest law firms?

Is your city a "Social Register City"? How many of its corporate leaders are also considered social leaders? Do they intermarry, join the same clubs, attend the same meetings?

Who runs the United Fund or Community Chest Drive? Is it always a corporate leader? Do the boards of the leading charities always include the same fifty or sixty corporate leaders?

Are there key decision-making groups in your community-like the Vault in Boston, a group of top industrialists, so named because they met regularly in a bank vault to make the city's key economic decisions? Can a political candidate who offends major business interests or leaders in your city get elected? Can a public agency enforce antipollution, or consumer-protection, or property-tax laws against corporations without reprisal?

Has Wright Patman's House Committee on Banking surveyed the power of banks in your community? How much power do they hold? How many bank officials are also trustees of city corporations? How much corporate stock do the leading banks own? Can researchers find out this information if the Patman Report does not provide it? How do City Council representatives feel about the banks? Are they afraid to regulate them, for fear of economic retaliation? How deeply in debt is the city to the banks?

Who owns the city? Do a few landlords control large blocks of land, or are ownership patterns scattered? Do city housing authorities control the landlords, or do the landlords control the housing authorities? Can corporate leaders and landlords determine the zoning policies of the city to suit their needs?

Who runs the unions? Do they conduct regular meetings, hold democratic elections and provide regular channels for internal change? How about union pension funds? Do banks hold them in escrow, retaining the right to invest them as they please?

Who runs the community itself? Are the wards structured democratically, or are they carefully controlled by a political machine? Does an urban bureaucracy exercise most of the political power in the community, shielded from the press and the public by a complicated maze of offices and agencies? Does the City Council exercise any power? Is the Mayor more than a figure-head? Can the city itself govern its activities, or must it rely on the goodwill of the state legislature? What does the City Charter allow?

A Peoples Bicentennial Commission with a grasp of these basic facts about a community will find itself in a good position to effect needed change.